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SUBJECT: LIBERIA SANCTIONS: UN EXPERT PANEL LAUNCHES NEW
MANDATE

¶11. (SBU) SUMMARY: The recently-reappointed Liberia Panel of Experts (POE) presented to the 1521 Liberia Sanctions Committee on February 13 a plan of attack for monitoring implementation of the Liberia sanctions measures, with a focus on assembling information on designated individuals and entities and tracking frozen assets. The POE requested the Committee facilitate access to financial records and confidential information on sanctioned individuals to better understand the reasons for keeping them listed/delisted. Also at the meeting, USUN formally objected to Ukraine's delisting request for Valeriy Naydo. In a private meeting with the POE, the POE finance expert urged the United States to focus on implementation of UNSCR 1532 paragraph 6 -- which expresses an intent to retain money on behalf of the host country -- and how this provision could affect how assets frozen under Liberia sanctions might someday be returned to Liberia. END SUMMARY.

UN EXPERTS LAY OUT THEIR TASK AHEAD

¶12. (SBU) The acting chair of the Liberia Sanctions Committee, Ugandan Permanent Representative Ambassador Ruhakana Rugunda, introduced two returning members of the Liberia Panel of Experts (POE), a UN team of experts mandated to monitor enforcement of the sanctions measures imposed on Liberia. Canadian Winet Smith (Coordinator of the Liberia POE and national resources expert) and American Tom Creal (financial expert) provided an informal briefing and agenda for the POE over the next year. The POE said they will travel to Liberia the week of February 16, with plans to travel throughout West African neighboring countries, Europe and South America over the next three months ahead of their first report, which is due June 1, 2009. They said they would work closely, as mandated, with the Cote d'Ivoire Group of Experts while they are in the region. The POE also noted that the Committee has received a proposal to add a Frenchman as the arms expert to the POE, which would bring the team to full strength.

¶13. (SBU) The POE expressed their gratitude that the Security Council had given them a longer mandate to carry out their mission (NOTE: In December 2008, Security Council resolution 1857 extended the POE mandated 12 months, as opposed to the POE's previous 6-month mandate. END NOTE). They noted two issues that they hoped to resolve: lack of access to confidential information to explain why individuals were sanctioned (noting that the public criteria on the Liberia Sanctions Committee website was insufficient) and lack of access to financial records. The POE highlighted that confidential records would be necessary for their task, newly assigned to them in resolution 1857, of assisting the Committee in updating the publicly available reasons for listing and identifying information of designated individuals

and entities. They expressed regret that the Liberians have not acted adequately on asset freezes, but noted that there has been some progress with regard to the travel ban restrictions. They explained that the panel's final report is due to the Committee on December 20, 2009.

¶4. (SBU) The Ugandan delegate thanked the POE for their work, noting with satisfaction that Liberia seems to be recovering well, but that the diamond trade industry remains a significant challenge to Liberian peace and stability. He also welcomed a quick and successful conclusion to the Kimberly process. Mexico thanked the Committee and noted their specific concern with small arms trafficking in the region. The POE reassured the Mexican delegate that analyzing small arms trafficking was one of their top priorities.

¶5. (SBU) The Committee also considered the de-listing request of Valeriy Naydo. The U.S. delegate explained that because the United States has not received independently verifiable evidence that Naydo no longer meets the criteria for sanctions, the United States objected to his delisting request. No other delegation spoke on the issue.

POE MAKES PRIVATE PLEA ON ASSET FREEZE

¶6. (SBU) In a private meeting with USUN, the POE suggested that the United States consider looking to the panel for guidance when assembling Statements of Case before proposing new individuals and entities for targeted sanctions. The POE

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also said that they were hoping to explore better cooperation with INTERPOL as an effective way to acquire information on sanctioned individuals. The finance expert (Creal) said he felt passionately that implementation of resolution 1532 paragraph 6 -- which expresses the intent to retain money on behalf of the host country -- should allow frozen assets to be returned to Liberia. Creal asked the United States to think more broadly about asset reclamation in Liberia. He further requested that the United States provide him with Citibank records of Charles Taylor and the loan file for a home in Maryland that was being constructed with assets that were supposed to have been frozen. USUN expressed support for the POE's work and reminded the POE that requests for information should ideally be sent to USUN in writing via the Secretariat.

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